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SUBJECT: INFORMATION REGARDING UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR
POPULATION ACTIVITIES (UNFPA) DRAFT COUNTRY PROGRAM FOR
GUATEMALA

SUMMARY

With USG funding in FY 2009 to UNFPA the USG in Guatemala sees an excellent opportunity for a more constructive collaboration between USAID and UNFPA. Greater initiative by UNFPA to engage USAID both as a donor to and partner with UNFPA will facilitate greater commitment among those working in reproductive health and family planning. The USG program in Guatemala implemented by USAID welcomes the opportunity to coordinate with UNFPA to make programs more effective and efficient. There are several technical areas in which both programs overlap. By UNFPA more vigorously coordinating its efforts, duplication of efforts can be avoided and synergies amplified contributing to potentially significant results.

The current host government leadership in Guatemala in the area of family planning and contraceptive security has been deficient. Internal forces and organizational change are forcing a potential transformation of the family planning and reproductive health program. The Ministry of Health's (MOH) determination to buy contraceptives in the private market, at much higher prices than those offered by UNFPA will likely result in the MOH buying less and spending more, leaving a large unmet need for contraceptive supplies. Family planning is widely recognized by technical experts worldwide as one of the most cost-effective measures to improve the health status of women and children.

To many of those working in the area of reproductive health and family planning, the key principles for supporting coordinated, country-driven action adopted some years ago by donors fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic would serve as a potential model. This kind of approach fosters complementarities and efficiency among the donors and between donors and host governments. The USG in Guatemala urges strong UNFPA leadership to address the challenge to establish a framework for effective coordination among multilateral and bilateral donors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and host government.

END SUMMARY

USG Response to UNFPA Draft Country Program

The USG in Guatemala was asked to respond to specific points regarding the UNFPA Draft Country Program. The following are the questions and responses to matters specified in the original action request cable.

11. What is the extent to which the host government supports the program financially or politically?

Current host government laws, policies and priorities serve as

the foundation for the proposed program. The Population and Social Development Law and the Universal Access to Family Planning Law serve as the platform for the proposed components. Furthermore, a year ago, President Colom declared reduction of maternal mortality as one of his administration's priorities. This declaration is captured in the national health plan submitted by the Ministry of Health. The host government provides financial support to the program; however the funds are insufficient to meet the population needs and program gaps.

¶2. How is the UNFPA program coordinated with other host government programs, NGOs and other donors?

Currently, the UNFPA program has an agreement with the MOH implemented by an office at the Ministry called the Reproductive Health Unit, with UNFPA staff based in the unit. However, the MOH has not provided the required leadership and coordination among the different internal units is limited. UNFPA has worked with a number of other host government entities in addition to the MOH such as the Presidential Secretariat for Planning and Programming and, the Presidential Secretariat for Women among others. UNFPA has also been active in regards to coordination with other donors and NGOs such as with the local International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) affiliate, Asociacion Pro Bienestar de la Familia (APROFAM).

¶3. What is the geographical extent of the program?

Although it is not completely clear in the Draft Country Program document, our interpretation is that the program is planned to have nationwide coverage.

¶4. Observations on how the program can be monitored and evaluated, adequacy of proposed performance measurements, the strategic fit of the program within larger development goals, and other technical matters.

Designing and implementing a monitoring and evaluation component into the program, including: a baseline, mid-term review and a final evaluation would be the best approach to evaluate the program and monitor its implementation. If properly managed, the program could contribute to improve important development goals, such as to reduce maternal and child mortality. The UNFPA program could also contribute to improve quality of services and contraceptive coverage. The proposal, however, only broadly defines the technical approach. In order to properly judge the technical approach of the UNFPA program, it would be necessary to receive more detailed information rather than general statements. The proposal would be strengthened if it included critical indicators such as maternal mortality ratio and infant/neonatal mortality rate, both of which are essential to measure impact of the proposed program. These are vital indicators monitored by the host government and help inform programming for the USG maternal and child health program.

McFarland